

**CITY OF LOUISBURG, KANSAS  
MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING  
February 22, 2022**

<https://boxcast.tv/view/city-council-2-22-22-116718>

The Council of the City of Louisburg, Kansas met at 6:30 p.m. in regular session in the City Hall Council Chambers. Mayor Donna Cook presiding.

Council Members Steve Town, Scott Margrave, Clint Ernst, TJ Williams, Tiffany Ellison  
City Administrator Nathan Law  
City Clerk Traci Storey  
City Attorney Jared Anderson  
Police Chief Tim Bauer  
Fire Chief Gerald Rittinghouse  
Communications Coordinator Jean Carder  
Public Works Supervisor Craig Hufferd  
Visitors Barbara Smith, Mike Johnson, Bill Fields, Richard Rhodes, James Long, Thorvald McKiearnan, Kim Richardson, Fred Fendorf

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Councilmember Tiffany Ellison led the pledge of allegiance.

**APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA**

Councilmember Clint Ernst moved, seconded by Councilmember Ellison and carried 5-0, to adopt the agenda as written.

Councilmember Steve Town moved, seconded by Councilmember Scott Margrave and carried 5-0, to approve the regular meeting minutes February 7, 2022.

Mayor Cook and Councilmember Ellison had questions regarding the bills list. City Administrator Law explained. Councilmember Ernst moved, seconded by Councilmember Ellison and carried 5-0, to approve the bills list.

## **VISITORS**

Barbara Smith said she would like to talk about lighting the water tower. She had talked to a local lighting company regarding the lights and was told it would be an easy process to change bulb colors for events or holidays. Smith also added she would like a committee developed for lighting up the Little Round House at the lake. Mayor Cook said the lighting of the tower was discussed at the last meeting. Mr. Law had provided examples and the Council was interested as well. Cook is forming a committee for the tower and painting of downtown doors. She invited Smith to serve on the committee and will reach out to her when more details are available. Councilmember Ellison asked if the Park Board should be involved with decisions on the Little Round House. Mayor Cook agreed that should go to the Park Board.

## **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Mike Johnson is wanting to build a duplex at N. Fourth and N. Mulberry. He will be required to run about a block of water line and about 150 feet of sewer line. He would like the city to waive the hook-up fees for the meters. Johnson said the city is requiring 3 manholes for a sewer tap. He talked with his contractor and estimates the cost to be about \$35,000. City Administrator Law said the conversation was actually installing 2 manholes and have it go under the road to connect to the closest manhole on the S.W. corner. Mayor Cook asked if this item had gone before the Planning Commission. Administrator Law said this isn't a Planning Commission issue. He said historically past development regardless of size the developer pays to extend utilities. He said staff doesn't have the authority to waive the fees. Councilmember Ernst asked if this is necessary work. Law said the sewer work has to be engineered and that work will determine the number of manholes needed but in Staff's experience two manholes will be required. Mr. Johnson asked who mandates that. Law said the project must be professionally engineered and approved by the state. City Attorney Anderson advised the council to take this under consideration and to allow council to make an education decision and recommended this be discussed at the next meeting.

Mayor Cook asked if there are other public comments that aren't on the agenda. There were none.

## **DEPARTMENT REPORTS**

**Fire Department:** None

**Police Department:** None

**Public Works Department:** Craig Hufferd Public Works Supervisor said he is presenting a new hire for the sewer treatment plant. Mark Anderson had previously been with Johnson County for 15 years. He has a class 4 wastewater license, which is very helpful. Councilmembers asked questions. Mayor Cook said she would like new hire information in the packets. Councilmember TJ Williams moved, seconded by Councilmember Margrave and carried 5-0, to hire Mark Anderson with the rate of 3-8A.

### **CITY ATTORNEY'S REPORT**

None

### **MAYOR'S REPORT**

**Mayor Appointments:** Mayor Cook presented the 2022 Appointments. Councilmember Williams moved, seconded by Councilmember Ernst and carried 4-0-1(Town abstained) for Steve Town to be Mayor Pro-Tem. Councilmember Williams moved, seconded by Councilmember Ellison and carried 5-0, to approve the 2022 Appointments.

Mayor Cook asked if the snow removal at Cathy Hall's residence had been checked from the latest snow storm. Hufferd said it was done properly.

The National Honor Society reached out to Mayor Cook asking for projects for them to do. If there are any projects, please let Jean Carder know. They have around 80 members.

### **ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT**

**Master Planning Report:** Mr. Law gave a brief overview of this item. Mayor Cook asked if aren't most of these items either completed or in the works. Mr. Law said yes. Councilmember Ellison asked if these are the Certified Local Government process through the state's Historic Preservation Office. Mr. Law said most of the steps had been previously completed but he has not found any documentation that the process was finalized at the state level. Mayor Cook asked about the Capital Improvement Plan if anything needed to be done. Law said that is on the list to revamp.

**Hills at Prairie Crossing:** City Administrator Nathan Law explained how a Public Hearing would be held if the draft resolution passed. The property owner is here to present his information. Mayor Cook said at this time public comments will be heard and speakers are limited to three minutes. City Attorney Anderson reminded everyone the process tonight is not the final determination or approval of any ordinance. If a Public Hearing is approved, it would have to be published and at that time everyone would have an opportunity to speak.

Those who spoke opposing the project were Barbara Smith, James Long, Thorvald McKiernan, Kim Richardson and Fred Fendorf.

Bill Fields representing Tercet Homes, LLC asked the Council to approve the resolution for the RHID for Hills of Prairie Crossings. He understands that 25 years and \$10 million are out there, but the City has not negotiated the proposed agreement. He hopes in the future they are given the opportunity to negotiate the terms of the RHID. Fields is asking for approval of the resolution so there could be negotiations and a public hearing. In addition he would be happy to host a forum for the public. Councilmember Williams asked if he could address some of the concerns that were brought up from those who spoke. Fields said he thinks there have been misunderstandings about figures in the documents. Comments were made from the audience. City Attorney Anderson interrupted those comments and said there should not be a back and forth conversation with Mr. Fields. Mayor Cook asked if it would be agreeable to less than 25 years. Councilmember Ernst asked if the RHID is not approved would the development proceed. Mr. Fields said no. Councilmember Ellison said she thought tonight would have been the negotiations. Councilmember Williams asked about the negotiation process. Mr. Law explained the process. Mayor Cook asked for a motion. Councilmember Ellison asked questions regarding the vote, which Attorney Anderson explained. Councilmember Town moved to accept Resolution #2 to go into negotiations and proceed to a Public Hearing. Motion died for lack of a second.

Rocky Rhodes said Bill came to him with this development opportunity and asked if they could partner in it. Over the last 20 years things have changed with developments. It used to be the land was the primary driver of costs. Today it is the infrastructure costs and not the land costs. Currently a single-family lot is around \$70,000 for infrastructure per lot. Without growth towns begin to die he said. Councilmember Ellison feels that the community didn't want RHID then, now or in the future. Councilmember Williams asked if there is a process if the Council doesn't want the city to entertain the idea of a RHID for the next 5-10 years? Administrator

Law explained that you can't restrict any future Governing Body from taking action. So anything you do today could be undone at the next meeting or next year.

**New Pool Filters:** Administrator Law said this was discussed at the previous meeting. He explained the difference between the steel filter and fiberglass filter. Public Works Supervisor Craig Hufferd has talked to Westport Pools and provided answers Council had asked at the last meeting. He recommends the Neptune Benson filter. This filter will also have better clarity for the pool, require less chemicals thus reducing those costs and eliminates the need for backflow. It comes with a 20-year warranty. Councilmember Williams moved, seconded by Councilmember Ellison and carried 5-0, to purchase the Neptune Benson filter with glass media from Westport Pools.

**2022 Asphalt:** Council was presented the 2022 proposed street work and cost estimate from the recently completed street survey. Hufferd said prices could change due to the price of oil. Councilmember Ernst asked why some of areas of the map include dashed lines instead of an entire street being highlighted. Hufferd said on some streets only certain sections of the streets need repair while the rest of the street is fine. The dashed lines show those areas. Mayor Cook asked who determines what the overlay is. Hufferd explained how 2-inch is a standard overlay that is recommended by KPWA. Any failing streets could be 6-8 inch depth repair. Councilmember Ernst asked about the streets budget. Mr. Law said the budget covers street repair and other infrastructure improvements including concrete work, such as gutters and curbs, and striping. Councilmember Williams moved, seconded by Councilmember Ernst and carried 5-0, to bid out this 2022 asphalt scope of work.

**Pay Consideration:** Administrator Law said we continue to see employee turnover, which is why this item is before Council. We have had 11 out of 34 employees leave over the past year, with some due to pay and some not. This is a stop-gap measure to retain employees until the pay study is finished. Councilmember Williams asked if the biggest shortage is in the Police Department. Mr. Law said yes, but most municipal police departments are having the same issues. Police Chief Bauer said the recruiting has been very difficult when other nearby agencies offer a better pay range. Last year Louisburg fell behind all the other agencies in Miami County on starting salaries. He hopes this gathers interest in employment opportunities and stems turnover. Councilmember Ellison asked if our benefits aren't as comparable to other areas. Chief Bauer said Louisburg offers adequate benefits but is not comparable to benefits offered at metro agencies. Administrator Law said hiring bonuses are becoming more common in other areas as well. Chief Bauer said this consideration sends a good faith message to officers and noted that

the starting salary is within a dollar of a part-time position at a name-brand convenience chain. Councilmember Ellison asked about the budget process and if this increase would be effective immediately. Mr. Law said yes, the raise would be effective immediately as a stop-gap measure. Mr. Law said typically annual pay considerations are brought to the Council in January but the recently approved pay adjustment really just covered the cost-of-living increase. Councilmember Williams said retention is way cheaper than recruitment. Councilmembers had discussion. Councilmember Williams moved to approve the request of the stop-gap measure of \$1 per hour and not to exceed \$70,720. Councilmember Ernst asked if the pay study comes back and all employees are still low, would it come back to the council with an additional increase request. Mayor Cook and Administrator Law both said yes that could happen. Councilmember Ellison asked what budget the increase comes out of. Administrator Law explained. Councilmember Ellison seconded the motion, which passed 5-0.

## **COUNCIL REPORTS**

**Councilmember Williams:** Councilmember TJ Williams said he would like to address the RHID. He said he talked to different cities that utilize the RHID program. They seem to really like the program. Williams said he thinks what fell short here is they asked for the moon on the front end. He thinks there is a time and a place for that program. Williams said he wants to keep an open mind on this.

**Councilmember Ernst:** Councilmember Ernst thanked Hufferd to taking care of the snow problem at Starbrooke. A big thank you to all staff for all their hard work.

**Councilmember Ellison:** Councilmember Ellison thanked Hufferd for information on the pools.

**Councilmember Margrave:** None

**Councilmember Town:** Councilmember Town asked if there was a timeframe for the Metcalf 2.0 project start date. Mr. Law said it is scheduled for later this year. It will be 185-day construction period.

Town asked about a traffic light at Amity & Sutherland Drive near the Casey's. Law said a KDOT study would be done no earlier than the spring.

Councilmember Ernst asked about the recent gas leak. Mr. Law said it had been repaired and explained the situation.

Mayor Cook asked about the easement right-of-way. Mr. Law said there are two types of easements. There are street right-of-way and utility easements. Easement widths vary throughout town.

**ADJOURNMENT**

At 8:14 p.m. Councilmember Williams moved, seconded by Councilmember Margrave and carried 5-0.

Approved:

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Donna Cook, Mayor

Attest:

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Traci Storey, City Clerk